

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

MAY 11 1931

U. S. Department of Agriculture

8-2
11-9
I n 3 HH
HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, May 11, 1931.

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "Fitting Out Wrinkles." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Fitting Dresses and Blouses."

---O---

"Bless us!. Now what's the world coming to?" exclaimed Uncle Ebenezer stopping right in the middle of a dish of oatmeal to peer at me over his spectacles.

"Gracious me!" said Cousin Susan.

"Aunt Sammy turning into a beauty specialist? Oh, how funny," said Betty Jane.

That is the way my family responded when I announced at the breakfast table that I was going to give a talk today on wrinkles.

And Cousin Susan added in a very disapproving tone of voice that she was afraid I had been reading too much about those actresses in Hollywood.

"Cosmetics, youth restorers, face lifting and that sort of thing. All so dreadful. Oh, my. Dear me," said Cousin Susan.

Then it was my turn to laugh a little. I promised Cousin Susan that I wouldn't mention face creams or skin lotions. I promised that I wouldn't even speak of complexions. The wrinkles I referred to were not caused by old age but by poor dressmaking. My subject, I explained, was making new frocks and not making over old faces.

Cousin Susan looked relieved and Uncle Ebenezer had a merry twinkle behind his spectacles.

It is a pleasant thought that the wrinkles, puffs, and bulges that spoil the looks of dresses can be prevented much more easily than the wrinkles in faces. Preventing them is partly a matter of cutting out the garment correctly and partly a matter of proper fitting. So before you start making your summer clothes, I have a few fitting hints for you. This year's styles, especially, need careful fitting. The new dresses with their decided waist lines, flares, fitted hips and set-in sleeves need to set smoothly and

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

100

perfectly on their wearers or their attractive appearance is lost. That dreary home-made look may be caused by a skirt that sags in front, or a sleeve that wrinkles and pulls, or a bulge at the neck-line.

Few of us have standard figures. We may be thirty-sixes, but the chances are that we are not perfect thirty-sixes. Some of us are short and stout and others of us are tall and stout. Some of us are size fourteen around and size twenty in height. Some of us have broad square shoulders and others sloping shoulders. So we can't expect that the commercial pattern or the ready-made dress, cut to fit an average figure, can exactly suit us all. The only solution is to choose the size that is most nearly right and then adjust it to suit individual needs. Every woman who wants to be well-dressed will find it worth while to know the principles of proper fitting.

A well-fitted garment should allow freedom of movement without being too large and it should be free from all unnecessary wrinkles and folds. The general style of the dress determines whether the fitting should be snug, easy or loose. A tailored outfit, for example, may fit more closely than a lace afternoon frock. For large figures garments that fit easily look best, for tightness emphasizes the curves and makes the figure appear larger. Did you ever notice how much fatter a fat lady looks in a tight shiny satin dress? In general any garment is better too loose than too snug, since one that is tight is neither comfortable nor attractive. In summer clothes especially it is necessary to allow for shrinkage of the fabric when it is cleaned.

All of us recognize a nicely fitted dress when we see it. But we need to know the different details that go to make up this perfect fitting. First, you will notice that the warp and weft of the material runs straight around the figure at the hips and chest and at the largest part of the arm when a set-in sleeve is used. The way you lay and cut the pattern is important here, as well as the way you fit the dress. A second detail is the way the dress falls. The underarm seams and the center front and back threads of any garment should be perpendicular to the floor. The skirt hangs straight without swinging either to the front or back. Then there's the hem. If the hem-line is even, it will be the same distance from the floor at all points. The length of the skirt will be determined by the fashion as well as by the height, weight and figure of the individual.

To be sure that the dress is cut straight, lay both the material and the pattern smooth on the cutting table with not a wrinkle nor a crease in either. Use plenty of dressmaker pins or weights to hold the pattern securely when cutting. Mark the perforations and notches with chalk and mark the center front and center back with long, uneven basting as a guide for accurate fitting and the correct placing of pockets, trimmings and other parts. Be sure that the pattern lies straight with both the warp and weft threads of the material. When cutting out a sleeve, for example, the lengthwise markings on the pattern must lie straight with the lengthwise threads of the fabric, and the underarm seam-points at the armscye must fall on the crosswise threads of the fabric. If the material is folded, both the lengthwise and crosswise folds must be exactly parallel and at right angles with the selvages.

Before cutting out your dress, stop and make sure of one thing -- that the shoulder of the back section of the pattern is one-half inch longer from the armscye to the neck-line than the shoulder of the front section. This extra length will be eased onto the front edge when the shoulder seam is basted. Most patterns make this allowance, but if yours doesn't, go ahead and cut it as if it did. This extra amount is needed across the back, especially for slightly rounded shoulders. And unless your dress sets correctly at the shoulder line, it will never fit well.

A very successful dressmaker I know says that a properly placed shoulder seam acts as an anchor to a well-fitted garment. For this reason it should be located most carefully and the shoulder should be the first part of the dress to be fitted. Correct fitting at this point means that the material will be smooth across the chest and the shoulder blades with no wrinkles or bulges at the front and back and no appearance of tightness. The normal shoulder seam should be a straight line from the highest point of the neck to one-half inch back of the highest point on the tip of the shoulder. A good method--

But there. I mustn't stop to tell you all the secrets of fitting shoulders both wide and narrow, of fitting necks and waists and hips. That information is all in one of our bulletins. It's a bulletin on fitting problems of all kinds, and is full of advice to help you avoid wrinkles wherever they are inclined to appear. "Fitting Dresses and Blouses" is the name of it.

Now for our Monday menu. The main dish is Shepherd's pie. This is one of the best ways to use left-over meat or chicken and left-over mashed potatoes from your Sunday dinner. Creamed meat and mashed potato are combined in one baked dish. Cover the sides of a greased baking dish with a thin layer of seasoned mashed potato. Fill the center with well-seasoned, creamed meat or chicken. Then cover the top with the mashed potato and bake until the pie is hot through and lightly browned on top.

That is Shepherd's pie. With it let's serve Mixed savory greens. Sliced orange and raisins on lettuce with a sweet tart dressing will take the place of both salad and dessert.

For variety in greens, two or more kinds may be cooked and served together. Mixed savory greens make an interesting dish because of the blend of different flavors. Beet greens and turnip tops are a good combination. So are field cress and spinach, or corn salad and mustard greens. Wash the greens through several waters and cook them quickly in an uncovered kettle in a small quantity of lightly salted water. As soon as they are tender, drain and chop them. Season with bacon fat and sprinkle over the top a little crisp cooked bacon broken into small pieces. Or, cook a little chopped onion in butter until both onion and butter are slightly browned. Then mix it with the chopped greens and add salt and pepper to taste.

Tuesday: "Artificial Coloring in Food."

###

10-11-1918

Dear Mr. [Name]
I have received your letter of the 10th inst. and am
glad to hear that you are well. I am
also well and hope this letter finds you
the same. I am sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.

I am sure that you will
understand my position. I am
very sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.

I am sure that you will
understand my position. I am
very sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.

I am sure that you will
understand my position. I am
very sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.

I am sure that you will
understand my position. I am
very sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.

I am sure that you will
understand my position. I am
very sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.

I am sure that you will
understand my position. I am
very sorry that I cannot
write you more often but I am
very busy at present.